

"HOW IT WAS"
by
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How It Was

BY GORDON HALL GEROULD

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY TOWNSEND

RICHARD DRAYTON was nearly fifty when his father died. One would have expected him to grieve, since he was a man of normal affections, but no one could have forecast the event as a crisis in his life. Old Henry Drayton, the father, had always been an ineffectual person, although in his latter days he had become an appealing and picturesque figure. There was attached to him the legend—always so hard to believe, and therefore so attractive, about a gentle and well-preserved old man—that he had been very wild in his youth. There was the story, for example, that Drayton's blindness was the result of some parental folly long ago. But the two were obviously on the best of terms. Henry Drayton took an almost pathetic pride in his son's success, while Richard made as much of his father as if he had had reason to be proud of him. All of which made grief natural, but did not explain why Drayton should even think of dropping out of things when the tie was broken. Certainly he had no cause whatever to reproach himself; whereas, if the old story were true, he owed to his father one of the heaviest handicaps that can befall a man.

Richard Drayton had succeeded, in spite of his blindness. He had increased the family fortune enormously—rescuing it, everybody knew, from the wreck it was falling into when he took over

the business from his father's feeble hands. He had been busy with public affairs, moreover, long before he accepted public office. When he went to the Senate, he went because his own party at least recognized his wisdom and honesty as well as his capacity for getting things done. If in a way his blindness was a help rather than a hindrance, the advantage was due him. He had struggled against heavy odds, and he had shown that without eyes he was a better man than most of those who can see. During the campaign his opponent said privately long before the election that he should lose his faith in human instincts if he won out. A blind man can have no enemies, but a blind man who is also able can have almost anything else he asks for. Drayton made a good record in Washington, too, as the leaders of the opposite party ruefully admitted. He never asked any favors on account of his infirmity, but he always won a little more esteem for what he did than would have come for the same action to a man who could see. And nobody grudged him his good fame.

It remains to add that in his private life he had been as fortunate—except, always, for his blindness—as in business and politics. At thirty he had married Alicia Gardner, a brave and competent woman, who had devoted herself with equal fervor to his career and

the other League play. But, unfortunately, he had let his intentions be known, and an Aunt whom he did not want to Disoblige wished a Young Lady Friend of hers on him. He was Game, however, and spent the time of the Preliminary Practice telling her the Names of the different Bases and other such Bits of Information, just as if she wanted to know them. She did not say much, nor ask any Questions, but seemed fairly Intelligent.

Along in the Second Inning a White Sox base-runner started to steal Second,

and was thrown out by Half a Mile or so. As he slid into the Waiting Ball, the Girl exclaimed: "Oh, how stupid!"

"Oh, No," said her Instructor, "that wasn't wrong. They call that Trying to Steal a Base, and he takes a Chance that he can get there Ahead of the Ball."

"Yes," said the Girl, "but didn't he see the Catcher signal for a Pitch-out? I did."

Moral: When about to Teach, first learn whether it is to be Primary or Graduate Work.

Sierra Moon-Down

BY HELEN POTEAT STALLINGS

Cry again, white owl,
You will not waken
This sleeping valley.
The far snow-tipped mountains
Are too old to care.
Sleeps placidly the village court-house,
Holding aloft its golden flagpole,
Challenging the giant moon.

Horses escaped from their corral
Move like dreams across the square,
Dark shadows, with one white shadow,
Moving slowly on heavy, unshod feet.
Cry again, white owl,
Nested safely in the ranch posts
Bluebirds may hear you
And feel their small hearts beat.
The innkeeper's fowls are
Sheltered securely.
Under the dew-wet meadows gray
Gophers are covered deep and warm.

Cry again, white owl,
Your wild cry will not waken
This sleeping valley.

to their three handsome children. Being an outspoken creature, she used to say that she had married Richard because, without eyes, he was worth any half-dozen other men she had ever met. It was as clear as daylight that they were a happy pair.

With everything to give zest to life Drayton should not have been thrown off his course, one would think, by the death of his father at so ripe an age. He had never before shown any sign of morbidity, and he had seemed ambitious as well as eager for work. Yet three days after the funeral he went to Manlove, the chairman of the State committee, and announced that he shouldn't be a candidate for re-election when his term expired. The primaries were coming on in three months' time.

"What's that?" cried Manlove, who was a bundle of nerves, though he usually kept them under good control.

"I've decided it isn't worth while," Drayton answered. "I've had enough of public life."

"But you've made good, senator," protested Manlove, wriggling in his swivel-chair with astonishment and perplexity. "What's the sense in talking about quitting? You'll have a walk-over this time."

"I'm not giving up because I fear defeat." Drayton had a supernal way with him at times which people might have resented if he had been less competent and if he had not been blind. "I wish to retire from public life, that's all."

Manlove, who had had long experience as a lawyer and political manager, looked both worried and incredulous. Drayton, sitting straight in the leather-backed chair opposite him, was the best party asset in the State at the moment, and had to be handled with discretion even when he behaved absurdly—as he

had never done before. Manlove naturally suspected some hidden sense of injury, and began to probe for it.

"Don't you realize that you can't very well get out—not in justice to the rest of us—when you've got the whole party behind you? It isn't often that a man has such strong backing as you've got right now. If anybody has been suggesting the contrary, he's a double-dyed fool."

A faint smile played about Drayton's marred but handsome face. "You're on the wrong track, Manlove. I've been treated with nothing but kindness, and I'm ever so grateful. But I've made up my mind to retire. I'm not indispensable, and I prefer a quiet life."

"You don't like it in Washington?" asked Manlove, showing by his tone that he was completely puzzled. Men didn't give up an office, in his experience, except for cogent reasons.

"Yes, I like Washington very much, but I'm tired of it. You may not realize that a blind man has to work harder to keep track of things than a man who can see. I've worked very hard for thirty years, and I propose to take a rest."

"Of course, you've been a glutton for work," granted Manlove, "but you don't look as if you felt the strain of it. Couldn't you take a vacation—go somewhere—before the campaign begins?"

"I intend to, and while it is on as well. I consider that I've earned a long holiday."

"Yes, yes, you have! But you don't want to drop out when you've got everything going your own way. You—you've got responsibilities, too, senator. You mustn't forget that."

"It's precisely what I'm going to do. I've been shouldering responsibilities all my life, but I'm through with them."

Except that I shall probably attend to my private affairs from force of habit, I plan to spend a useless and unencumbered old age."

Manlove was bewildered, and he was becoming righteously displeased. "What's happened to you?" he burst out. "We can't argue this thing unless you'll show your hand. Tell me what's on your mind. You know that I've always been your friend."

Drayton got up from his chair and walked with his hesitating blind man's step to the desk behind which Manlove was ensconced. Resting one hand upon it, he extended the other. "We'll shake on that, Manlove. You've been the best of friends, and I'm sorry to disappoint you if you've really been counting on me. But the fact is I've no incentive to go on any longer. Suppose we leave it there."

His tone was so decisive that Manlove couldn't well refuse to shake hands and let him go. The austere attendant without whom Drayton never went anywhere came forward from his station near the door, and Drayton grasped his arm. They were out and away before Manlove had recovered from the shock.

Manlove was by no means satisfied to let it go at that, however. Left alone, he puzzled and puzzled over the matter, but failed completely to hit on any reason for Drayton's sudden announcement. He thought of old Henry Drayton's death, but he could see no connection. It wasn't as if the father could have left either properties or debts that required attention—nothing of consequence, certainly, since everybody knew that Richard Drayton had been managing the estate since he was thirty. Nor was it reasonable to suppose that the loss of his father had plunged him in grief. He

behaved with perfect self-command. What incentive could have disappeared? For the life of him, Manlove could not see.

Neither could the innermost circle of his political friends, to whom he confided the state of affairs after extracting pledges of complete secrecy. It was important that no hint of Drayton's disastrous resolve should get out for the present. Possibly something could be done to make him change his mind, though Manlove was at a loss about the arguments to use. How could you argue with a man who refused to say anything except that he didn't like his office any longer and was going to chuck it? The political friends did not know. They shook their heads and, after the manner of their kind, begged Manlove to "get in touch with the senator at once," as they put it. He was the manager, they intimated, and therefore ought to manage. Personally, it was clear, they had no desire to try to move Drayton if his mind was made up. They had experienced his firmness before, some of them to their confusion. As to what was going on in his mind, they professed indifference. The thing to do was to get him to take back his announcement and consent to go into the primaries like a sensible man.

This was all very well, but it neither helped nor comforted the State chairman. He mulled over his difficulties for three days, and at the end of that time could think of nothing better to do than make a last desperate appeal to Drayton himself. Although there were two or three men not unwilling to accept the nomination, and possibly able to carry the election, Manlove couldn't give up a certainty without a struggle. He got into his car and headed for Drayton's house in the country, pre-

ferring—for all sorts of reasons—to arrive unannounced.

As he drove up the avenue of elms, his hope forsook him. If Drayton had lost his taste for public life and intended to throw off his responsibilities, he had everything he needed—save the use of his eyes—to make him happy in idleness. It might be foolish to attempt to dissuade him. Yet Manlove was not the kind that gives up in the face of difficulties, and he had besides the incentive of curiosity. He could not imagine what had happened to destroy Drayton's ambition almost overnight, for apparently nothing else had changed. He would see. Perhaps in his own home Drayton would talk more freely than he had been willing to do the other day, and just possibly he might still be open to argument.

Unfortunately for Manlove's plans Drayton was not about. The sympathetic maid who came to the door said that he had gone driving. Wouldn't Mr. Manlove wait? He thought not, since the senator's wanderings in the pony phaeton he affected were admittedly of uncertain length; but he hesitated, for he wished to get the interview over with, and he had motored forty miles.

While he stood irresolute, a car whirled up the drive. Mrs. Drayton stepped out briskly and greeted him. As always, she was cordial, although she looked to Manlove either troubled or far from well. Possibly, he thought, black was unbecoming to her, or possibly she hated to have her husband retire, was worrying about it, and might prove an ally. Although he did not know her at all intimately, he remembered that she had the reputation of having been a useful as well as a devoted wife. So he accepted gratefully

her invitation to come in for a cup of tea with her while he waited.

"Richard won't be long now," she said. "He likes to poke about the country with our funny pony. He says he can think better in that basket phaeton than anywhere else. I go with him when I can, but he insists that Mac is quite as good company as I am. You know Mac, don't you? Everybody does who knows my husband. Of course, the joke of it is that Mac never speaks if he can help it."

Quite at ease she led the way to a room overlooking the garden that Manlove had never entered before. This was evidently her own room, and usually closed to political visitors. Manlove felt surer of his ground now. Mrs. Drayton wouldn't bring him in here unless she wished to talk. So far, so good. What he wanted, first of all, was enlightenment. Even if she approved her husband's decision, she might clear up the situation and furnish a basis for argument.

Until she had given him tea, however, she prattled inconsequently, making him laugh with funny tales of the pony phaeton and the saturnine attendant. The pony really belonged to her fifteen-year-old son, it appeared, but had never struck his fancy, which was strange because, like the gloomy attendant, it attracted minor adventures. Manlove said little, but took pains to keep the conversation going. There would be no sense in forcing the note. He was right, as things turned out. After ten minutes of desultory talk, Mrs. Drayton turned to him with a suddenly altered tone.

"My husband called on you the other day, didn't he?"

"Yes. And he gave me a very disagreeable surprise."

"He told me. You don't think he ought to give up?"

"I certainly don't," Manlove broke out in the impetuous way he had when he let himself go. "I don't say we couldn't elect another man, but I'm sure we couldn't get anybody else half so good. I think he has a duty in the matter."

"Perhaps he has. On the other hand, Mr. Manlove, have you ever considered what his life has been like? Perhaps he has a right to his long holiday." Mrs. Drayton's voice was level and quiet.

Manlove frowned nervously. "Just what do you mean? Of course, I know the senator has been a terror for work. He's accomplished a lot. Do you mean he's in danger of a breakdown?"

"Oh, no. He says he has never been better in his life, and I think it's true. But hasn't he earned a rest?"

"Why, I suppose he has, if you put it that way. What I can't see is why he wants to quit. He always gives the impression of liking to do things, and he's in the position to have even more influence if he goes back to Washington for a second term."

"That's true enough," said Mrs. Drayton, "but he seems not to care about it—not now."

"Do you mind telling me why not? That's precisely what I couldn't find out when we had our talk."

Mrs. Drayton hesitated. "He didn't tell you?"

"No. He said very firmly that he didn't care to run again, and left it there."

"Then perhaps I'd better not talk. He's quite capable of making any explanations that are necessary."

"That's very true!" Manlove laughed, though uneasily. "But don't you see where it leaves me, Mrs. Drayton? I

honestly want what's best for him as well as the party, but I can't understand why his father's death—if that is it—should make such a difference with his plans. I have the feeling that if I only knew I might somehow save him from making a big mistake."

Mrs. Drayton turned her head away from her visitor and looked out at the garden. For a little she did not speak, and Manlove's gaze followed hers to the sunlit green of the turf, the blended gaiety of the borders. It was very peaceful here, he thought, and it would be very tempting to a man who really cared nothing for the struggle of active life. At last Mrs. Drayton shifted her eyes back to Manlove.

"Do you happen to know," she asked, "how my husband lost his sight?"

Manlove started. What was the woman driving at? There was some old story, of course, which involved the father scandalously, but he couldn't—it was so faded in his memory—recall just what had happened, if indeed he had ever known the details.

"I'm not sure I've ever been told," he answered with complete honesty. "It was an accident of some sort, wasn't it?"

"Oh, yes, it was an accident." Mrs. Drayton was very grave. "I think perhaps you ought to know—perhaps I ought to tell you. Richard couldn't do that. It may help you to understand his position now."

"Please do," he urged her.

"It was common knowledge at the time, or I couldn't speak of it. There's very little to tell, really. My father-in-law—" She broke off. "It seems cruel to say it, with the dear old man just gone, and it's almost incredible when one thinks how gentle and patient he

was—but I suppose it is a fact that he was wild with drink at the time. It was very long ago.”

“He fired the shot?” said Manlove quietly, partly remembering now and thinking to help her out.

“He was fooling with the gun in a dangerous way, and threatening to kill himself. Richard—a mere college boy then, you understand—tried to take the gun away. Then it happened. I don’t know whether it was worse for my husband or for his father.”

“Terrible for both of them,” Manlove murmured. “I’m very glad you have told me.”

“You begin to see?”

“It makes what the senator has accomplished more wonderful. He must have gone straight on as if nothing had happened to him.”

Mrs. Drayton smiled. “As a matter of fact, he didn’t. He would say that he went all to pieces, though I think he’s unjust to himself about it. The shock was horrible in every way, and probably his poor father’s grief didn’t help at first. You can understand?”

“It would have been worse than death for any father.”

“He nearly died of it,” declared Mrs. Drayton. “Both of them have told me that. Later, of course, he was all the prouder of what my husband accomplished.”

“He must have been—poor man!” exclaimed Manlove.

“Yes,” went on Mrs. Drayton, “I’ve never seen anything more beautiful than their devotion to one another. There has always been pathos in it for me, considering what it was that brought them so close. I’m sure that everything Richard has done, every obstacle he has made light of, has given his father more

pleasure than any one else in the world—even me. Infinitely more than he has got out of it all for himself. Success, for him, has been something to make his father happier.”

Manlove regarded himself as hard-boiled. Most of his acquaintances, both in and out of politics, would have agreed with the estimate and cited instances to prove the point. Yet he found it hard to speak. He wished he had kept away, for he hated to get so stirred up. What Drayton did was his own affair. Obviously, he took his father’s death much harder than appeared from his manner. Pride and native reticence made him hide his grief; but he might very well feel that the chief reason for hard work was gone, since his father could no longer enjoy the results of it.

“I understand,” said Manlove at length. “I think he has every right to give up, but I hope all the same that he won’t. It would be a pity.”

“Yes, it would be a pity.” Mrs. Drayton spoke as if she were weighing every word. “I believe he would be happier to keep on, but I can’t help seeing that he has earned his holiday. Isn’t that true?”

“Yes; oh, yes. I hadn’t realized before.” Manlove made a wry grimace. “It doesn’t make what I’ve got to do any easier, to tell the truth. I’ve got to present the claims of the party, and it’s going to be hard work.”

Just then there were steps in the hall outside the open door.

“Thanks, Mac. I’ll do very well now,” said Drayton at the threshold. “In here, Alicia?”

Mrs. Drayton was at his side in a moment. “Yes, dear, and I have Mr. Manlove with me.”

“Manlove?” A frown gathered on Drayton’s face, but it changed almost

instantly to a welcoming smile. "How are you, Manlove? Hatching something with my wife?"

"Taking counsel, that's all," said Manlove, clasping the hand uncertainly outstretched. "The truth is, Mrs. Drayton is almost too loyal to you. I can see that she agrees with me, but she sides with you."

Drayton chuckled quietly and groped for a chair. "What else did you expect, my dear fellow? You have met her before. Aren't you ready to admit that I have a right to leave the arena if I want to?"

"That isn't the question," returned Manlove. "To my mind it's a question of living up to an opportunity. I'm forcing myself on you like this, senator, because I believe you have a great chance and a real duty."

"And will disarrange your plans if I don't run?"

"That's a consideration, certainly," agreed Manlove without a smile. "But I hope it's only a minor one."

"Of course it is." Drayton dropped his tone of mockery. "I suppose it's inevitable that we have this thing out. Maybe I was too high and mighty the other day. I didn't intend to be rude, but I may have been. I had just made up my mind that I could be free, and I couldn't stand the thought of interference. But I owe you an explanation, at least."

"What I'd like to know," said Manlove slowly, "is why you wish to be free. It's a thing I've no right to say, perhaps, but I can't believe that a public man ought to let his private troubles interfere with his services to the people. Shouldn't you say so of another man?"

Drayton's face grew strained, as if he, too, failed to understand. Then his

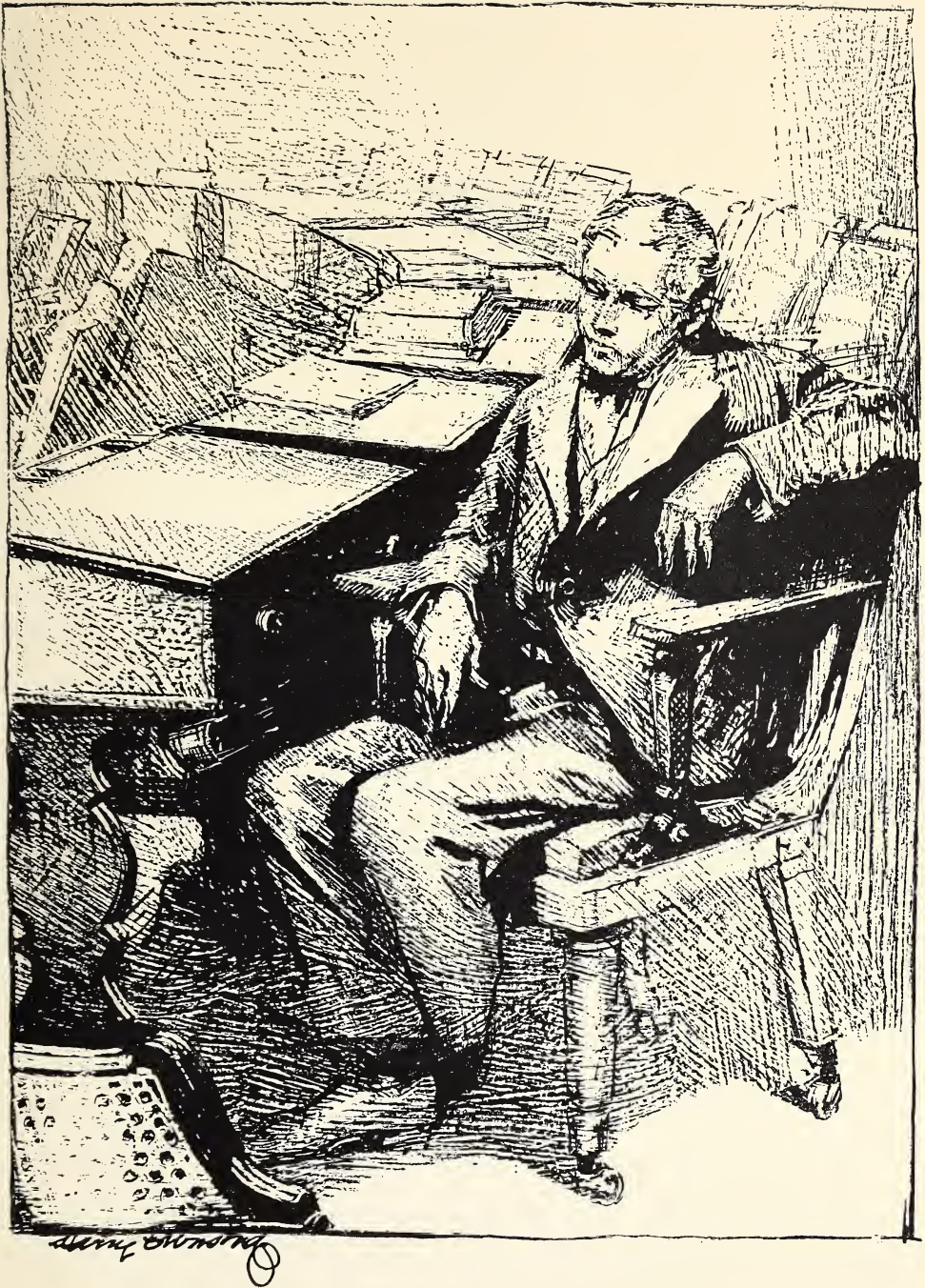
expression cleared. "No, Manlove, you haven't got it right, though it's very true that I loved my father as much as a son well could. It isn't because I'm hard hit by his death that I'm inclined to give up public life. It's because—it's very hard to explain."

"I think Mr. Manlove knows the old story," suggested Mrs. Drayton gently. "He will understand."

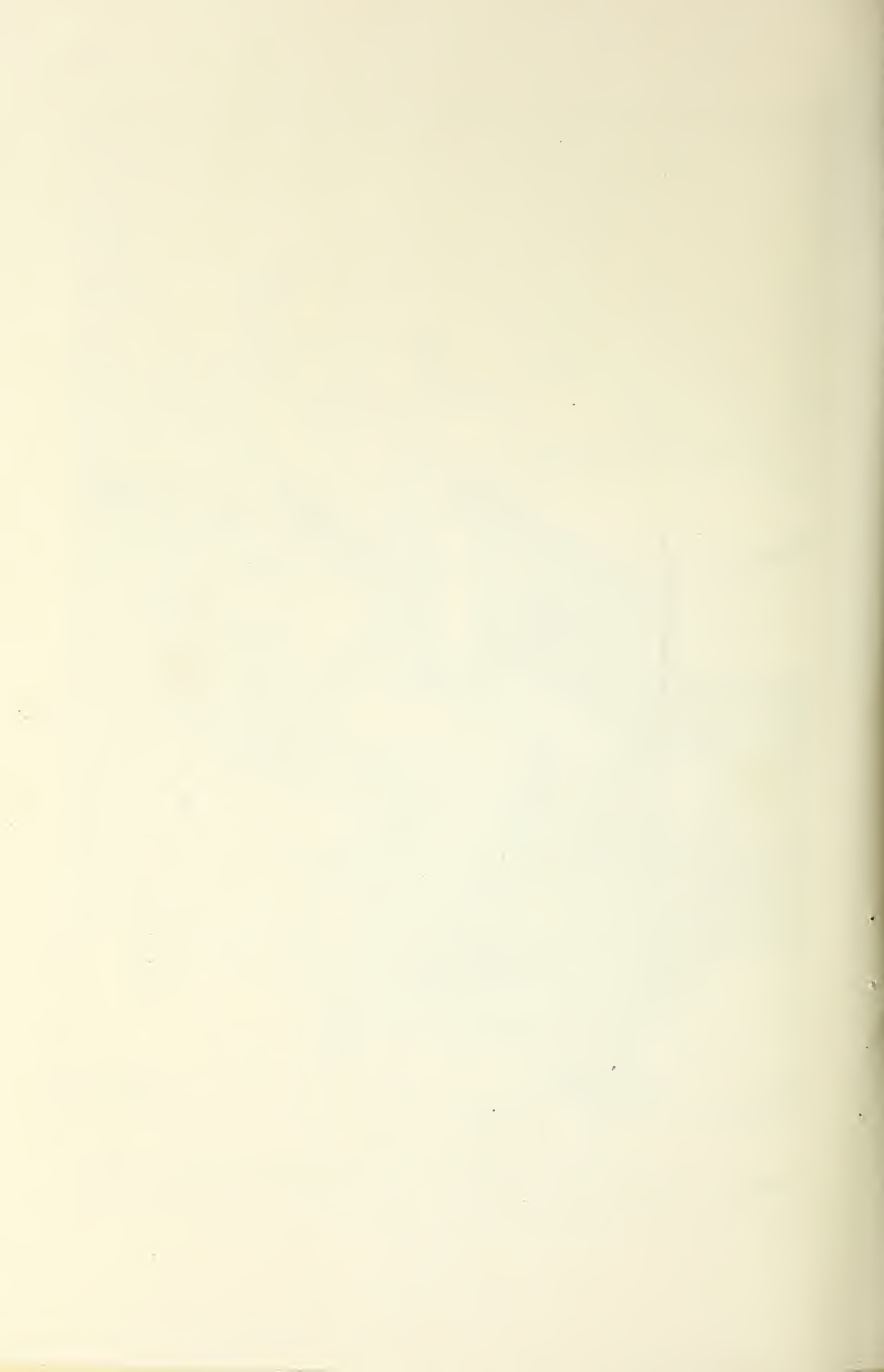
"Yes, yes. Thank you, my dear. Don't you see, Manlove? I've worked my level best, ever since I was a mere boy, simply and solely to keep my dear father from feeling that a mistake of his had cut me off from things. I couldn't do anything else, could I? I've made him think that I liked the work and the worry, when all the while I've wanted leisure to think, and to have the books read to me that I really care about, and in my poor blind way to enjoy life. By nature I'm a lazy fellow, and, as I was saying to you the other day, a blind man has to concentrate his attention terribly if he's going to accomplish anything. But now there's no reason why I should keep up the pretence."

"You mean that you've made your career what it has been for the sake of convincing him that your—your misfortune didn't matter?" Manlove was rephrasing it to himself as the poignancy of the situation sank in.

"Just about that," went on Drayton cheerfully. "Of course I've been interested in the things I've done, but they've never been my chief incentive. I couldn't spoil his life by letting him believe he had spoiled mine. In a way I've enjoyed myself, but I've always taken it for granted that I needn't go on beyond my father's lifetime. Heaven forgive me! I suppose I've looked to his death, half unconsciously, as a time of re-



A living sacrifice for thirty years—hadn't he the right to indolent peace?—Page 455.



lease." His voice broke a little as he spoke the words.

Manlove was silent. How could he urge further labor on this blind man who to mitigate a father's just remorse had given up his life to heroic effort? A living sacrifice for thirty years, according to his own admission—hadn't he the right to indolent peace?

Drayton waited a little, as if for assent. When no one spoke, he shifted in his chair and threw up his arms with a gesture of appeal. "I hear no enthusiastic applause," he said in a different tone. "Won't you come to my help, Manlove? I know that my wife disapproves of me, but I hoped you might back me up."

Mrs. Drayton rose quickly and placed herself behind his chair, laying one hand on his shoulder. "My dear Dick, how can you? I'm incapable of disapproving of anything you decide on. But I don't want you to do anything that you'll regret later."

"Applause!" Manlove found his voice at last. "My dear senator, don't you realize that if your story got out, nothing either you or I could do—or the other party, for that matter—would keep people from voting for you? Yet I'm not going to urge you any longer to keep on—I can't. Publicly and privately you've done your part. Only—well, I'd like to vote for you just once more, myself."

Drayton reached up and took his wife's hand; but when he spoke, his words were for Manlove. "It's good of you to say so. I appreciate it. The worst of it is that I'm afraid I shall have to accept your offer. I've been thinking hard on my own account, and I'm not so sure as I was that I can give up my job until I'm beaten at the polls. Driving

about with Mac has had a very steady-ing effect."

"You mean you might consider—?" In his eagerness Manlove did not complete his question, but his face brightened.

"Just that," went on Drayton. "I still stick to it that I have a right to my freedom, but I'm not sure I can take it. You think I mustn't, and so does my wife, whose judgment is also very sound."

"My dear! my dear!" protested Mrs. Drayton vehemently. "You shan't be forced into something you don't like simply because you think it will please me. I shall be perfectly satisfied to have you retire."

Drayton smiled, but did not relax his pressure of her hand. "No, that couldn't well be, though you'd try magnificently to like it. The fact is, we can't wholly control our preferences, though we can steer our behavior. That's what I must do. A man can't, I suppose, give up responsibilities he has assumed unless he has a very good excuse—not lightly, for a preference merely."

Manlove saw that he had won his point, yet he felt far from happy. "Hang it all, senator!" he burst out. "I've half a mind to say that I won't on any account manage a campaign for you. I would, too, if I had only my own inclinations to consider."

"There you are!" exclaimed Drayton. "Nobody is free. I was foolish to think for a moment that I might be. Besides—it's a habit, of course—I probably shouldn't like living even in this blessed spot for eight or nine months a year. I'm very much afraid I'm chained to my accustomed work."

Mrs. Drayton disengaged her hand from his, but patted his shoulder.

"More than that, my dear, you rather like your chains. So do I, and so, no doubt, does Mr. Manlove. We're middle-aged together, and rebellion is not only useless—it's distasteful to us."

"That's very true," said Manlove gravely, and rose to go.

"No; you're both wrong," Drayton

declared, rising in turn. "Revolution what we can't stand. An occasional rebellion, properly safeguarded against success, keeps alive the fires of youth."

The correct ironic ending for all that you know, would be a whacking tory for my opponent next November.

Manlove crossed his fingers piously.



Youth's Defiance

BY ELIZABETH LAROCQUE

WE cry, it is not so, it cannot be,
It is not fair that Life should treat us thus;
Others are twisted, broken, but not we,
For surely happiness was meant for us.

And surely dreams come true and Life is sweet,
And moonlight never ceases to be fair,
And there are wings upon our thoughts and feet,
And great adventures wait for us out there.

And surely love is strong and has no end,
And kisses are like fire and like dew,
And we have each a thousand years to spend,
For surely, surely, all our dreams come true.

And surely—but our voices break and cease,
And silence clasps our hearts and turns us pale,
And mocks our happiness, and slays our peace,
And soils our Faith, and leaves it gray and stale.

For moonlight plays us false, and kisses fall
Like fire, but as lightly as the dew;
And Life's a spoken word beyond recall,
And of a thousand dreams but one comes true.

And love is like the flickering of a flame,
And we who once had faith are now too wise,
And we who once looked heavenward toward fame
Have seen our star come hurtling down the skies.



